



MARYLAND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEER CORPS

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

July 2005

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

Michael S. Steele
Lt. Governor

S. Anthony McCann
Secretary

Michelle Gourdine, MD,
Deputy Secretary for
Public Health Services

Mission Statement

Maryland Health Care Professional Volunteers Corps consists of health care professionals working together to provide emergency care for the citizens of Maryland by responding to catastrophic events throughout the state of Maryland.



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FROM THE DESK OF MICHELLE GOURDINE, MD Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services

Volunteering not only helps others...it helps you!

Since joining the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) in February 2005 as the Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services, I have been impressed with the Maryland Health Care Professional Volunteer Corps. The dedication of the volunteers (Physicians, Pharmacy, Nursing, Dental, Social Work, Professional Counselors and Psychology) and their willingness to play a vital role during an emergency event is commendable. I believe everyone has the ability to make a difference and one way to do that is by volunteering.

The opportunity to impact lives starts with personal commitment. Volunteers are individuals who reach out beyond the confines of their paid employment and their normal responsibilities to contribute time and service in the belief that their activity is beneficial to others as well as satisfying to themselves. Your continued support as a member of the Maryland Health Care Professional Volunteer Corps is vital in the event of an emergency.

Volunteer roles and responsibilities depend on our mission and your individual skills: Maryland Health Care Professional

Volunteers Corps consists of health care professionals working together to provide emergency care for the citizens of Maryland by responding to catastrophic events throughout the state of Maryland. As volunteers you will be providing relief to victims of disasters and helping people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. To prepare volunteers to participate in this vital mission, DHMH and the health care licensing boards provide hands-on and online training, exercises, drills and continuing education (CEs). For those of you who have not yet participated in the training, I encourage you to contact your licensing board and participate in upcoming trainings and receive your identification badge.

We thank you for making the commitment to raise awareness about the importance of volunteering and serving Maryland citizens. We invite you to continue to be a part of the solution—together we can save lives.

Please keep your 24-hour contact information current (work and home phone numbers, fax, e-mail, pager, cellular etc.) with your licensing board so you can be reached quickly. ■



MARYLAND MENTAL HEALTH VOLUNTEER CORPS

(Social Work, Professional Counselors, Psychology, Psychiatry, Psychiatric Nursing)

The Mental Health Volunteer Corps has a new face! Katie Anelli is the new volunteer coordinator of the Corps. Katie has been active in Emergency Services and Disaster Response for the past seven years. She is looking forward to a busy summer for the Corps.

The Corps continues to recruit new members and will be offering four new volunteer orientation/training sessions over the summer. Current members can sign up for one of four

half-day refresher/continuing education sessions this summer. In addition look for information about drills for the Mental Health Corps to be forthcoming.

Spam Filters Impairing Call-Down Efforts

Recent findings from Florida emergency response agencies have found that Emergency Response and Activation notices sent to responders via e-mail are sometimes returned as undeliverable. *USA Today* reported on May 2 that "AOL treats

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MARYLAND NURSING VOLUNTEER CORPS

Even though there are a large number of volunteers registered, more are always needed

To date just over 2,200 nurses have volunteered to assist in a mass casualty event. Approximately one half of the volunteers have been trained. Trainings are scheduled September 29, and October 18 for those volunteers who have not yet received training. Even though there are a large number of volunteers registered, more are always needed. The Nursing Board estimates that, at best, only one quarter of the volunteers would be available at any one time. A large-scale event such as the hurricanes in

Florida last year would require more volunteers than can currently be provided. Help from other states may take up to 72 hours to arrive.

If you know any nurses who may want to volunteer refer them to the Board's Web site for an application or have them call Lisa Vorhoff at 410-585-1923.

The Board appointed Lisa Vorhoff manager for the volunteer program effective June 15. She will be able to give the program the time it needs to be successful. Her role will be to plan and implement trainings,

communicate with volunteers, manage the volunteer database and assist in organization of drills. Lisa comes to us with experience working in the training division of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Information about reaching Lisa will be on the Board's Web page. One of the first activities Lisa will be doing is to update the database of volunteers. A letter will go out to all volunteers in the near future requesting updated information and some additional information to help in contacting volunteers in an

emergency. Until she is settled into her office, she can be reached at 410-585-1923. Should you have any questions about training or volunteering, feel free to contact Lisa.

The Board is excited about some new online training in development that will provide more specific information about nursing in a disaster and as well as links to other disaster training. It is hoped that the training will be available in the Fall. Check the Web site www.mbon.org in September for information. ■

MARYLAND PHARMACY VOLUNTEER CORPS

More than 45 pharmacists participated in the Board's Emergency Preparedness Drill

On Saturday, March 19, the Board of Pharmacy held an Emergency Preparedness Drill. Over 45 pharmacists enthusiastically participated this important exercise. For about four hours volunteer pharmacists and other participants helped to work the kinks out of the plan drawn up by the Board. Communication was tested during a timed exercise that involved participants telephoning hundreds of other pharmacists soliciting their participation. In another phase of the drill, tasks such as repackaging of medication for actual distribution,

dispensing "pills" (M&M candies) to the "patients", and different forms of counseling (mass counseling, regular counseling, special needs counseling) were evaluated.

The Board offices were turned into command and communications centers and the meeting rooms in the building were transformed, at varying times, into staging areas, mass counseling reception, re-packaging areas, supply centers, dispensing, and other counseling areas. Pharmacists and volunteer "patients" tested their acting abilities, playing out scenarios

such as illiteracy, language difficulties, specific medical concerns (such as diabetes), and the effect of drugs on pregnant women, as well as "wanderers" – persons trying to get into restricted areas.

Dr. Lisa Kirk, director and Joan Lawrence, volunteer program director with DHMH's Office of Emergency Preparedness & Response, and Dr. Richard Bissell, associate professor and Drew Bumbak, program director, with UMBC's Center for Emergency Education and Disaster Research/NDMS Training Program monitored the drill.

As is expected with any drill, some parts did not go smoothly. At the "wrap-up" session the pharmacists and other participants critiqued the events of the day. The constructive criticism will go a long way toward making pharmacists more efficient in an emergency.

The Board of Pharmacy again thanks those who volunteered their time, expertise and advice to help prepare for incidents that we all hope will not occur.

For information on recruitment, training, exercises, and updating your contact information, please contact the Board of Pharmacy at 410-764-4755. ■

MARYLAND PHYSICIANS VOLUNTEER CORPS

Vacation Reminder!

It's that time of year again...vacation time. The Maryland Board of Physicians hopes you have a great time if you decide to travel this summer, but we also ask that you please keep us in mind before you leave. If you plan on leaving Maryland for an extended period of time, we request that you contact us to let us know of your absence. Since timing is essential when a disaster occurs, it would greatly expedite our call-down process if we knew who was unavailable. This year alone, more than 15 of your

colleagues have already sent e-mails notifying the Board of their absence or planned vacations. Thank you

Additionally, we ask all volunteers to take this time to verify that your contact information is up-to-date by resubmitting the Volunteer Corps Contact Information Form, which you can find on the Board's Emergency Preparedness Web site, or by just sending your name, work, home and cell phone numbers and e-mail address to the Board by calling 410-764-4762 or via e-mail at jzucco@dhmh.state.md.us. By

keeping your information current, not only are you helping the Board, but in the event of an emergency, you are helping the entire Maryland community.

Smile. Say Cheese.

As you know, having your photograph taken for your Volunteer Badge is one requirement to become a volunteer, and often the most inconvenient. This summer, the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator will be attending Southern Maryland Hospital's Continuing Education Meeting on August 17 at noon and will be available to take photo-

graphs. To schedule a photo session at your place of work, call 410-764-4762.

Spread the Word!

Attention all volunteers, if you feel that being a volunteer is important and want to spread the word, call 410-764-4762 to request that someone speak at your hospital about Emergency Preparedness and the Volunteer Corps! Also, please spread the word about the online training that is available and free at the Board Web site at <http://www.mbp.state.md.us> ■

MARYLAND MENTAL HEALTH VOLUNTEER CORPS

(Social Work, Professional Counselors, Psychology, Psychiatry, Psychiatric Nursing)—
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Florida emergency e-mails as spam.” Florida emergency e-mail notifications regarding adverse weather were therefore often blocked. This occurs because emergency management e-mails are usually sent out in large blocks, with the addresses shown as Blind Carbon Copies (BCC). Spam filters on many e-mail services automatically block these e-mails and return them to the sender.

In Maryland, the Mental Health Volunteer Corps recently sent out e-mail notification of continuing education to all 609 current members who had e-mail addresses on file. Twelve percent of the e-mails sent out were returned as undeliverable. The Corps e-mails were distributed using the BCC feature.

Similar to the situation experienced in Florida, many of e-mails were returned due to spam filters or inactive accounts. In the event of an actual call down it is imperative to successfully reach all Corps members. If you have a spam blocking feature on your computer or server please add the following e-mail account, **kannelli@dhhm.state.md.us** to your address book so that you may receive activation, drill, and continuing education information.

For more information related to the Mental Health Volunteer Corps, please contact Katie Anelli, Coordinator Mental Health Volunteer Corps at **kannelli@dhhm.state.md.us**. ■

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COORDINATOR

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response welcomes Cathy O'Neill as the new Emergency Management Coordinator. Cathy comes to us with a wealth of experience; she worked at two area hospitals as the Director of Nursing for the Emergency Department. Part of her responsibilities was directing the hospital's emergency management programs to include developing, writing, coordinating and implementing disaster plans. She also was

responsible for representing the hospital in multi-agency exercises, obtaining grants and recommending disaster related purchases of equipment. Additionally, she is an active member of the Jarrettsville Volunteer Fire Company and is currently Emergency Medical Services Chief.

You have already heard from Dr. Lisa Kirk, Director, Office of Emergency Preparedness and Joan Lawrence. We'll be featuring a member of the Emergency Preparedness team in upcoming newsletters and their roles in an emergency. ■

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Be Informed and Prepare in Advance

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) thanks you for volunteering to assist the citizens of Maryland in the event of an emergency. However, in order for volunteers to be effective in an emergency it is important that a Family Plan is in place. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so we encourage you to “plan in advance” how you will contact one another, and what you will do in different situations.

When forming your plan be prepared to assess the situation, use common sense and take advantage of anything you have on hand to take care of yourself and your loved ones. Think about the places where your family spends time: school, work and other places they frequent. Ask about their emergency plans. Find out how they will communicate with everyone in the family during an emergency. If your family does not have an emergency plan, consider helping them to develop one.

[Creating a Family Plan](#)

You and your family may not be together when disaster strikes. Be prepared for a variety of situations.

[Deciding to Stay or Go](#)

Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the attack, the first important decision is whether you stay put or get away. You should understand and plan for both possibilities.

[At Work and School](#)

Schools, daycare providers, workplaces, apartment buildings and neighborhoods should all have site-specific emergency plans. Ask about plans at the places your family frequents.

[In a Moving Vehicle](#)

You may be in a moving vehicle at the time of an attack. Know what you can do.

[In a High-Rise Building](#)

You may be in a high-rise building at the time of an attack. Plan for the possibility.

Visit www.ready.gov for additional information on Creating a Family Plan, Deciding to Stay or Go, At Work and School, In a Moving Vehicle, and In a High-Rise Building. **BE INFORMED—about what might happen!** ■

Maryland Governor's Office of Homeland Security

The Governor's Office of Homeland Security was established on 23 June 2003, when Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. signed Executive Order 01.01.2003.18. The Office serves as the direct liaison to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, as well as coordinating State departments, agencies, counties, and municipalities in matters of homeland security and emergency preparedness.

Visit the website: www.governor.maryland.gov/homelandsecurity.html, learn more about its Vision, Mission, Key Initiatives, Strategic Priorities, Staff and more.

Contribute Your Ideas

This newsletter is created to keep you informed and to cover topics that are of interest to you. If there is a particular topic that would be helpful to you, let us know. Send information to:

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The services and facilities of the Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) are operated on a non-discriminatory basis. This policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex or national origin, and applies to the provisions of employment and granting of advantage, privileges, and accommodations.

The Department, in compliance with the Americans and Disabilities Act, ensures that qualified individuals with disabilities are given an opportunity to participate in and benefit from DHMH services, programs, benefits, and employment opportunities.

Maryland State Alert System

Maryland State Alert System is a five-tier system developed to alert local authorities and citizens of increases in the threat of terrorist attack. Paralleling the Homeland Security Advisory System, it complements the national alert level, and based on local assessments may be higher (but never lower) than the national level. During periods of heightened threat, citizens should be alert for further guidance on the nature of the threat and recommended individual protective measures.

Threat Levels:

Low Condition (Green). This condition is declared when there is a low risk of terrorist attacks.

Guarded Condition (Blue). This condition is declared when there is a general risk of terrorist attacks.

Elevated Condition (Yellow). An Elevated Condition is declared when there is a significant risk of terrorist attacks.

High Condition (Orange). A High Condition is declared when there is a high risk of terrorist attacks.

Severe Condition (Red). A Severe Condition reflects a severe risk of terrorist attacks. Under most circumstances, the protective measures for a Severe Condition are not intended to be sustained for substantial periods of time. ■

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